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ABSTRACT

The aim of this publication is to offer information that will assist the elementary school principal in the establishment or improvement of a school lunch program. The material focuses on the necessary ingredients of an effective school food service, the necessity of nutrition education as a part of a food service program, and the importance of serving all income groups. The various types of food service programs and the role of key personnel involved in these programs are also described in some detail. A substantial bibliography is provided at the conclusion of the presentation. (JF)

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THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AND THE FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

John N. Perryman

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FOREWORD

William H. Forsberg

THE aim of this publication is to help the elementary school principal establish or improve the school lunch program. Since 1946, when Congress passed the National School Lunch Act, there have been repeated attempts to make lunches available to *all* children, on a free or reduced cost basis when necessary. Today, there is a rapidly developing interest in making the school lunch free to *every* child as an integral part of the school program. Benefits of the school lunch program have gone mainly to middle-class children and have missed the essential target—the children of the poor. Millions of children do not have the advantage of a school lunch, and many suffer from inadequate nutrition. Nor do children always participate when a balanced lunch is available; poor nutrition is sometimes due to poor eating habits.

The school lunch program should do far more than alleviate hunger. Principals should also ensure that it is offered as a valuable and pleasant social experience. As Bruno Bettelheim stated in *Food To Nurture the Mind*, "Food given by the school without due regard to the child's self-respect poisons his relation to school and learning." Unfortunately, the lunch period is too often characterized by noise, confusion, and conflict. Children are herded through lunch lines and schedules in disorderly haste that allows little time for relaxation or the creation of an atmosphere for enjoying the school lunch.

Schools must take imaginative steps to meet both the physical and the psychological needs of their students. One way of achieving this is a program that provides both adequate nutrition and a rewarding social experience for all children.

William H. Forsberg is Principal, Zachary Lane School, Plymouth, Minnesota and President, National Association of Elementary School Principals.

INTRODUCTION

THERE is every reason to believe that school food service is here to stay. The most important considerations are the extent of the program and the quality of its service.

A food service operation, whether it is a huge centralized operation or a one-school unit serving only a few students, can be only as successful as the cooperative effort between the food service manager and the principal. Each must understand the other's function, and both must work for the benefit of the children. If you, the principal, only tolerate your school food service, your teachers are likely to oppose it, your students ridicule it, and your food service staff work without enthusiasm. If you support your food service and see it as a teaching aid and an opportunity for learning, you will be rewarded with enthusiasm by everyone.

The primary purpose of school food service is to make certain that a child has the energy he needs to carry him through the school day. Although sometimes confused, compromised, and circumvented by political power struggles, its basic purpose remains unchanged because it is keyed to a law of nature itself. Children must be fed where and when they are trying to accomplish the difficult work of learning. A hungry child cannot learn.

Whether we are discussing men or machines, any device, contraption, or creation that expends energy must have fuel to function. The family automobile provides a familiar example. If the tires are balding, we can make an administrative decision that they are good for another thousand miles. If the upholstery on the front seat is threadbare, we can cover it with the souvenir blanket from the honeymoon trip to Canada, which we don't use for football games anymore anyway. If the tune-up is long overdue, we can give it low priority on next month's budget. But if the car runs out of gas, it simply stops. Whether at a busy intersection or on a deserted road, it stops. There can be no argument, no administrative decision, no postponement, no room for reasonable compromise.

So it is with the human being. Our needs for clothing,

shelter, and recreation are susceptible to delay, decision, and deferment. This is not so with the body's need for fuel. When the source of energy is gone, functioning ceases.

Principals are more acutely aware than most people that any function of a school must be educational if it is to be justified. If "feed them where they are" is the first rallying cry of school food service, then "teach them why" must certainly be the second. One of the tragic areas of ignorance in our day is that most people simply do not know what foods are needed to maintain health. And in an increasingly urbanized society, we can no longer assume that a child will have proper food, just as we can no longer assume that he has sufficient exercise outside the school. To meet the latter problem, we have developed elaborate facilities and programs. Such activities are designed to contribute not only to the current health and fitness of the student but also to his long-range, adult ability to take care of himself. What more practical, sensible, everyday usable information can you give to your students than the knowledge of what to eat and why?

The third rallying cry of school food service must be "reach them all." We as educators would be disturbed if children chose to omit American history or the English language from their curriculum. We would be horrified if children could spend their years at school unexposed to even rudimentary math. Yet millions of our children go through school untouched by a sound nutrition program.

Every child should have available to him sufficient food to meet his physical needs while he is on the school premises. And this should be the responsibility of the school. With $42 billion a year invested in public education below the college level, students too hungry to learn represent bad economics, poor administration, and wretched humanitarianism.

If the educational system is to adopt this view, however, it must have a better understanding of the history and the function of school food service, its relationship to learning, its mechanics, and the responsibilities of its personnel. This booklet has been prepared in an effort to provide the basis for that understanding.

John N. Perryman, Executive Director
American School Food Service Association
Denver, Colorado

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE: WHAT IS IT?

> *"It is utter folly, from the point of view of learning, to have a compulsory school law that compels children, in that weak physical and mental state that results from poverty, to drag themselves to school and sit at their desks, day in and day out . . . learning little or nothing. . . . If it is a matter of principle in democratic America that every child shall be given a certain amount of instruction, let us render it possible for him to receive it."*

THE quotation is from a book entitled *Poverty*, written in 1904 by Robert Hunter, which disclosed the need for, and urged the establishment of, school food service programs.

Today, well over half a century later, millions of school children are hungry—some for lack of money, others because food service is not available at school. Recent figures indicate that there are 28,741 schools in America, including more than 6,000 in economically depressed areas, that do not have food service facilities. In his book, *The School Lunchroom—Time of Trial*, Bernard Bard states, "The school lunchroom is one of the most underdeveloped areas in American education. It is starved for facilities and starved for funds to serve the proper food in the right amount to children who need it, sometimes desperately." Bard and others have concluded that the future of America will be influenced in a number of important ways by what is invested today and tomorrow in school food service and nutrition education.

The school food service program should provide students with the food needed during the school day for physical, emotional, and intellectual development. A nutrition education program should help students establish life-long food habits and acquire information that will influence their lives and increase their understanding of the relationship between man and his environment.

The current nature and status of school food service programs evolved slowly during the past 50 years. Prior to the 1920's, there were limited programs in major cities like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. A few school officials began to

realize that malnutrition seriously affects the ability of children to learn, and for the first time a definite relationship was established between school lunch and the total nutrition of the child. During the 1920's, there was increasing recognition of the need for some kind of school food service, although many administrators looked on the program as only a mass feeding operation utilizing any foods children would purchase.

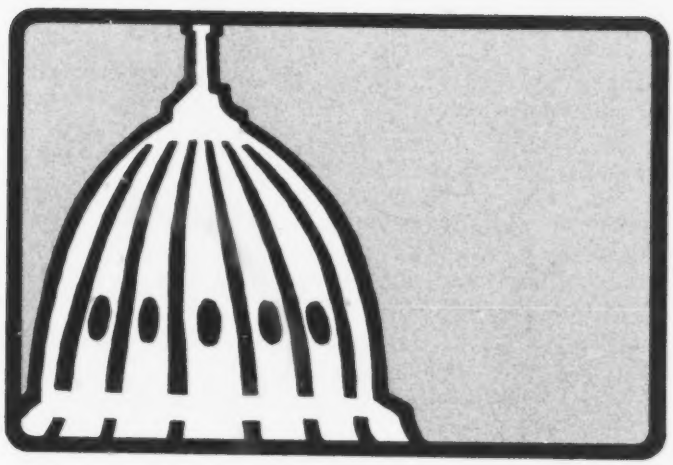
The Depression of the 1930's gave major impetus to the development of extensive and vigorous school food services. State and local governments passed legislation to encourage such programs, and many states authorized direct financial support for food service in schools. For the first time, schools received surplus agricultural products, a major factor in the growth of modern school food service programs.

Federal assistance to the program was initiated in 1933, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation made loans to a number of localities to pay the labor costs for preparing and serving lunches in schools. By the end of 1934, the Civil Works Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided federal assistance to 39 states. In 1935, Congress passed Public Law 320, which enabled the federal government to give added assistance to school food service programs in the form of surplus commodities.

World War II brought the awful price of malnutrition among the young to the attention of the nation. General Hershey, then Director of Selective Service, reported that one-third of the men rejected for physical unfitness were turned away because of difficulties traceable either directly or indirectly to nutritional deficiencies.

It was partially as a result of the findings of the Selective Service that, on June 4, 1946, the President signed Public Law 79-396, the National School Lunch Act, ". . . to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other foods. . . ." Although amended frequently over the years and substantially revised in recent sessions of Congress, this act is the basic authority for the present National School Lunch Program. It provides states with assistance in the form of cash and food for the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of the school lunch program.

School lunches should demonstrate good nutrition and pro-



vide at least one-third of a child's school day nutritional needs. An ad hoc committee of nutritionists and physicians, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to advise the United States Department of Agriculture, recommended that the school lunch provide one-half of the child's daily nutritional needs instead of the long-standing recommendation of one-third.

The "Type A" lunch, the foundation of the school food service program, is based on a specific menu pattern that is defined by the nutritional needs of children and not by the type of financing involved. The menu includes one-half pint of fluid whole milk, two ounces of protein-rich food, three-quarters cup serving of fruit or vegetable or both, one serving of whole-grain enriched bread, one teaspoon of butter or fortified margarine, and additional foods to meet the child's energy needs. Quantities are based on the nutritional needs of 10- to 12-year-old children, and portions may be adjusted for younger or older children.

In order to qualify for federal funds, the Type A program must operate on a nonprofit basis, and meals must be free or provided at reduced prices to economically needy children. However, some affluent communities operate similar programs without federal assistance.

Recent legislation, including PL 91-248, guarantees a free or reduced-price lunch to every child from a low-income

home. This legislation must be considered a landmark in the development of school food services: It has expanded and extended school food services more than any other legislation in the past 25 years.

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program must serve meals free or at a reduced price (each meal not to exceed 20 cents) to children who cannot afford to pay the full price determined by local school officials; publish notice of the availability of free or reduced-price meals; operate the food service program on a nonprofit basis; and serve meals that meet the nutritional standards established by the USDA. Schools financially unable to serve free or reduced-price lunches to all needy children may under certain circumstances be reimbursed up to a maximum of 60 cents per lunch for the total cost of free or reduced-price lunches. Nonneedy schools receive approximately 5 cents cash, plus commodities. This averages to about 9 cents per meal in most states.

Although there are severe administrative problems involved in the implementation of PL 91-248, benefits to children and the nation are beyond question. One of the requirements of this legislation is a "means test" to determine the eligibility of children for free or reduced-price lunches. The mechanics of determining needy students without identifying them as such is a difficult task at any level and a major administrative nightmare in large schools. The operational difficulties inherent in meeting the requirements of this legislation and the continuing realization that this program is only a partial answer to malnutrition have led many school administrators and others to believe that schools must eventually provide a free lunch to all students. If such a program is initiated, funding would probably be shared by the federal, state, and local governments.

Although lunch at school has been the foundation of school food service programs, other food service programs have been added or are under consideration in school districts across the nation. One of the most important innovations is the establishment of a breakfast program. Federal support for school breakfasts for economically needy children, through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, made it possible for many schools to offer a breakfast program. The program is a significant component of the school food service program for children who

leave home early in the day for long bus rides, for children who come to school early for special work, or for children who have no breakfast at home because there is no food or no one to prepare it.

School administrators and teachers have expressed considerable enthusiasm for the breakfast program in schools where it has been available, and there is substantial evidence that the program increases attendance, promptness, and classroom productivity. Like the lunch program, the breakfast program should meet the nutritional needs of the students, be available to economically needy students at no cost or at a reduced cost, and be operated on a nonprofit basis.

Under the provisions of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, a school breakfast meeting certain nutritional criteria may receive a 15-cent reimbursement or more, up to 80 percent of the cost of the food served. The recommended USDA breakfast menu, designed to meet one-third to one-half of the child's daily nutritional requirements, contains as a minimum: one-half pint of liquid whole milk served as a beverage or on cereal; one-half cup of fruit or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice; one slice of whole-grain or enriched bread, or an equivalent serving of cornbread, biscuits, rolls, or muffins made of whole-grain or enriched or fortified cereal, or any equivalent combination of these foods. As often as practicable, a protein-rich food such as an egg, an ounce of meat, poultry, fish, or cheese should also be served with breakfast.

In addition to lunch and breakfast, many schools are becoming involved in other types of food service. There is a trend, especially in high schools, toward providing additional foods at various times of the day through either the food service facility or vending machines. Elementary schools serve milk or fruit or vegetable juices to youngsters in the afternoon. But soft drinks and candy and other such packaged snack items have no place in a school food program. Several national organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, the American Dietetics Association, the Association of School Business Officials of the United States and Canada, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the American School Food Service Association, have passed resolutions against their use, thereby giving support to schools and school districts that seek to eliminate them from school offerings.

School food service facilities, including kitchens and serving areas, are sometimes used for the preparation and serving of food to preschool children and to the aged. Nutrition for the aged is a major problem in this country, and Massachusetts was the first state to enact legislation and appropriate funds for the use of school food service departments to serve lunches to needy elderly persons. Feeding programs for the aged should be financed from payments from adults or public funds, or both, and should not endanger either the budgets or time schedules of student programs.

School food service facilities are also used in emergencies such as floods, blizzards, hurricanes, or tornadoes. Because the school is a neighborhood and community center to which people gravitate in times of such emergencies, principals and food service workers must be prepared for such eventualities.

It is not uncommon for school food service facilities to be used for banquets or special school functions. Policies for special functions should be established by the school board or the principal or both and coordinated with the school food service manager. Such functions should be related to school activities, and they should not compete with commercial food service operations.

The role of school food service and the use of its facilities in the school are in a state of flux, and there are many trends in government, education, and society that may increase their importance in the next decade. The new community center concept of housing all welfare, health, and educational needs in a single complex has broad implications for school food service. The educational park complex, which may house 10,000 to 20,000 students of varying ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds, has special implications for food services, and the growing use of modular scheduling to increase utilization of both the school day and the school facility will require a new evaluation of food service scheduling. The 12-month school year, now in use or under study in various parts of the nation, may also extend the scope of school food services.

The current state of school food service indicates that it is becoming a significant and complex element in the total school program. The elementary school principal may need to reexamine his present food service program as it relates to the whole educational system.

NUTRITION EDUCATION AS A PART OF SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE

A school food service program that provides only food for the student—no matter how successfully—is failing in its role as a part of an educational program. It is both the function and the obligation of the school food service program to be a source of nutrition information to the student, the school, and the community.

The school lunchroom is a natural setting for pupils to develop desirable food habits, and it is a place for pupils to learn about the amounts and kinds of food needed by the body.

Dr. Jean Mayer, the distinguished Harvard nutritionist, noted in a meeting of a Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs that there is an appalling ignorance in this country of caloric values and nutrient content of food. He urged that states require nutrition education as part of the public school curricula, specifically a human physiology course (including nutrition) at the high school level.

Dr. Mayer's call for required nutrition courses in the high school is an important one. Educators and psychologists agree, however, that the study of such subjects as nutrition should begin earlier in life and that the motivation for later study must be established at the elementary level. It is true, of course, that nutrition education begins for each child the first day of his life and continues throughout his life. With each new food, the child establishes likes and dislikes, certain habits of eating, and attitudes toward food. By the time he enters elementary school, his eating habits are rather firmly set. In the school environment, these habits may be influenced directly or indirectly by the comments or behavior of playmates and teachers—and the school principal, who of necessity serves as an authority figure.

Whether or not a student easily learns new food habits at school depends in part on his flexibility, his curiosity, and his past and present eating experiences. At the elementary level, learning specific facts about foods is of less importance than learning flexible and nutritional food habits.

The school lunchroom should be a living laboratory where pupils can practice desirable food and health habits, and, because eating is a daily affair, these habits can be readily reinforced. Because a nutritionally adequate meal contains a variety of foods, children should have the opportunity to try, and subsequently learn to enjoy, new foods.

The school food service program is more effective if correlated with classroom instruction. A student will naturally have more enthusiasm for trying new foods if he is familiar with their history and knows their value in relationship to his own growth needs.

The food service department can also provide subjects for displays, discussions, or research in social studies, art, English, science, health, arithmetic, and an endless variety of special projects. The following suggestions are only a few of the possibilities for integrating school food service into the school curriculum.

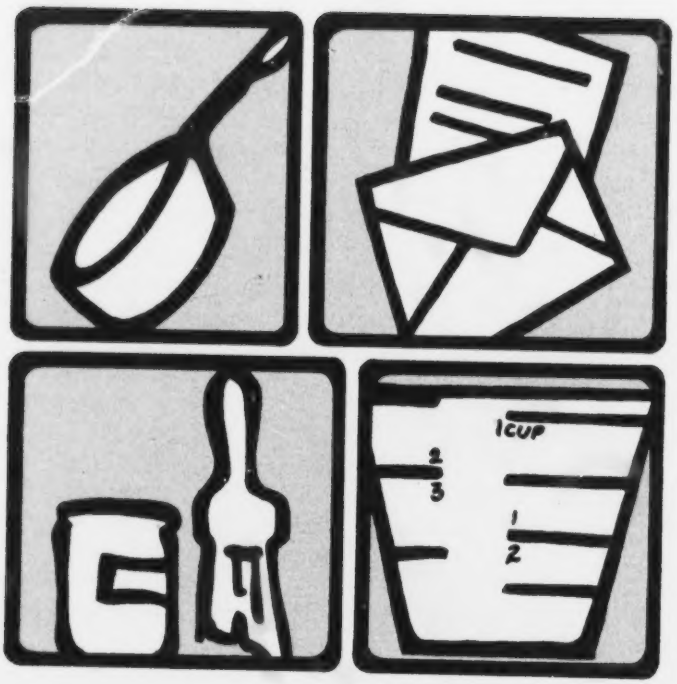
In language arts, students can write compositions or give reports about food and nutrition problems. A visit to the cafeteria to see how food is prepared and how kitchen equipment operates provides material for compositions or oral reports, for classroom use, for reports to parents, publication in the school newspaper, or presentation in a prepared press release to local media.

The proper forms for invitations and thank-you notes can be learned when students invite parents, teachers, or community leaders to school for lunch or tasting parties. Thank-you notes can be written to those who took time to attend and to the lunchroom staff for their special effort.

Daily menu and food preparation terms can be used for spelling or reading classes. Simple foreign phrases appearing on the menu may be used to introduce elementary school students to a foreign language.

Recipe amounts, management of money, handling of change, purchase of food in quantity, and percentages of participation are a few ways of associating the school food service operation with lessons in arithmetic at the elementary level.

Favorite foods and customs of other regions of the United States or foreign lands can be illustrated in lunchroom menus and at parties. The study of local and national food production and its influence on the lives of individuals can also be



correlated with food served in the lunchroom.

Health classes can use the lunchroom as a source of information about daily food requirements for growth and good health. Experiments with rats or other small animals can provide dramatic demonstrations of the importance of an adequate diet.

Sanitation is an important part of any food service operation, and students can learn the reasons and procedures necessary for sanitation through visits to the lunchroom and lectures by school food service personnel or local health authorities.

Posters showing the ingredients and value of a Type A lunch can be made in art classes and used not only in the school but also in the community. The lunchroom manager and the local school food service association will be pleased to provide source material for such projects. During the holidays, art classes can prepare decorations for the lunchroom.

The success of a nutrition education program in a school is

determined in large part by the attitudes of teachers and, even more important, the attitude of the school principal. Teachers and administrators are busy people and are often reluctant to add still another subject to their already crowded schedules. If the principal can demonstrate to the teachers how nutrition information can be integrated into several subject areas, a major step will have been taken in the development of an effective nutrition program.

If an elementary school principal is interested in developing a nutrition program in his school, the first step is to determine the extent of his teachers' knowledge. In most instances, there will have been little or no formal training in nutrition. The principal can obtain the services of the district food service supervisor, presumably a graduate nutritionist, in undertaking a nutrition program. The school nurse and the school food service director or manager can also be of substantial help in planning and conducting inservice training.

The principal can also find out if the nearest college or university offers a basic course in nutrition. He can urge faculty members to enroll in such a course and, if possible, offer incentives for participation. Some localities and states are studying the possibility of requiring nutrition courses for all teachers before they may qualify for certification.

Training courses for teachers should be based on the fundamentals and not the technical details of nutrition. A broad, general understanding of the subject best serves the teacher and the school. Several sources of information on nutrition are available to principals and teachers. The school lunch division of the state department of education, the state and national school food service associations, and several food manufacturers offer publications and provide speakers for programs and individual schools. A list of resource materials is included in this publication. (See pp. 30-32)

The school lunchroom can also provide students with an opportunity to practice the social graces and courtesies associated with eating. Students gain from relationships with one another, and whenever possible with teachers and the principal, and they may come to appreciate the need for responsibility for public property and concern for others by practicing neatness in the lunchroom. Here again, school food service becomes something more than simply a food service operation.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE: WHERE IS IT?

As with most aspects of education, school food service programs have traditionally been a matter of local option. The kind, type, extent, and operational procedures of the program have been left in large part to state boards of education or local administrative units. For this reason, a wide variety of school food service operations was developed across the nation.

No one type of program or financial formula suits all states or all school districts. The range of needs varies as widely as the kind of communities. An affluent, high tax-paying area, with no bused children, few or no economically needy students, and few working mothers, may require only the Type A lunch and nutrition education programs at one level in the elementary, middle, and high schools. In contrast, extensive programs may be needed in poverty pockets with low tax-paying ability, with many unemployed adults or migrants, many children coming to school without breakfast, many preschool children in need of day care, and other problems associated with economically deprived areas. Obviously, areas like these need breakfast programs, supplementary nourishment, lunch, possibly evening meals, arrangements for transportation of food to child care centers—and nutrition education programs comprehensive enough to combat established food patterns and nutrition ignorance of the children and their parents.

The two basic types of food service operations are the single unit or individual kitchen and the central or satellite system in which all or part of the food is prepared in a central location and transported to serving units in schools. Both have been in use in one form or another since the early days of the program. The individual kitchen in which food is stored, prepared, served, and totally maintained in a single location had its origin in the early days of the program when volunteers went into a school with their home kitchen pots and pans to prepare food or snack items for their own children and those of their neighbors. Although many consider the satellite pro-

gram an innovation in school food service, it was used in England at the turn of the century when food was prepared in a restaurant or home and transported in any available container to school.

Each type of service has its advocates and critics, and both are subject to variations in procedures, equipment, and techniques. Some authorities in school food service believe that the single unit operation is, and will remain, the best type of food service because it permits complete control within the school (including scheduling of serving times), provides a better base for integration of the program into the overall educational plan, and perhaps most important, permits a better quality of food. Other authorities firmly believe that the single unit food service operation cannot cope with the demands of expanding food services. They maintain that a central kitchen is less expensive, since there are fewer salaries and less equipment needed in the satellite serving areas. They also argue that it ensures a greater uniformity of product than possible in individual operations.

The question of which system is best has no single answer; it should be resolved by the needs of each school district. Therefore, only descriptions—without recommendation—of various programs in operation can be offered here. It should be noted, however, that in many instances school food services are a combination of both types of service—a trend that will probably continue as the demand for food service in schools without food preparation facilities increases.

The Fairfax County public school system in Virginia has individual kitchens in 153 of its schools and transports food to eight whose enrollment is less than 300 or to a school whose kitchen is being renovated. Emphasis has been placed on individual units because the district found that elementary school principals prefer to have their school equipped with kitchens to facilitate scheduling and permit use of the lunchroom for other purposes. The question of the comparative costs of completely equipped individual kitchens and of satellite kitchens in which some refrigeration, cleaning, and other equipment are necessary is a matter of some debate, and there may be vast differences in the amount of equipment considered necessary in satellite serving areas or kitchens.

In the Alamogordo, New Mexico, public schools, Type A

luncheons are served in the schools in the district. Eleven schools have individual kitchens, and the food is satellited out of four of the elementary school kitchens to two other elementary schools, the junior high school, and the high school. Two of the schools without kitchens have serving facilities that include a steam table, dishwashing machine, a small stove and refrigerator, and a pots and pans sink. Food is placed at the originating school in large portable hot and cold food units and transported in a two-ton van to the satellite units. There are variations within the system due to limitations of space or equipment or both at other schools. This is, however, a basic example of food service in a combination individual and satellite operation.

Atlantic City, New Jersey, is another example of a system with both self-contained units and a satellite program. The decision to develop a satellite program with food prepared in bulk and shipped to schools was made on the basis of simple need: The schools to which food is shipped lacked space to install kitchen equipment and were in so-called ghetto areas with a high percentage of needy students. The food is transported to schools and portioned and served to students in hallways.

In the Lima, Ohio, school system, seven of 14 elementary schools have their own individual kitchens, and several are satellite operations. The district decided that the satellite operation was necessary in some schools where funds were not available for individual units or where space requirements made individual units impossible. All elementary school buildings serving fewer than 300 students are operated as satellites unless geographical location prohibits the transportation of food.

In the Detroit public schools, food is processed and prepared in a central or base kitchen and put in steam table pans, which are then placed in heated transporting cabinets. Pans of cold foods, such as salads, are placed in refrigerated transporting cabinets. The cabinets are rolled onto a truck with a lift gate and delivered to the satellite or service schools. The lunches are served from a conventional serving line, and food is portioned to the student as he goes through the line. Disposable plates and utensils are used to eliminate the problem of washing. Pans are washed and returned to the base kitchen, where they are sanitized; leftover food is

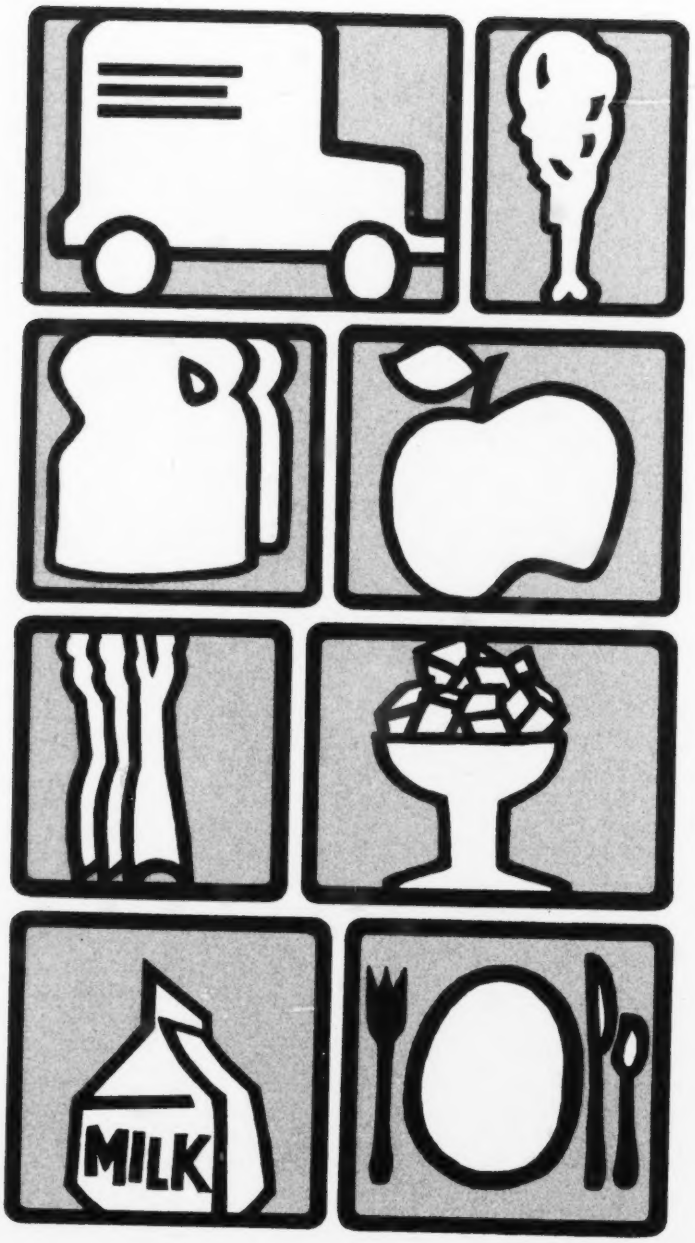
returned to the base kitchen, where it is disposed of. The Detroit schools find that the central or base kitchen system offers lower labor costs, permits better quality food service to schools that lack space for a self-contained kitchen and, by transporting in bulk, permits foods to be proportioned to the need of the student.

In some central kitchen operations, the food is preportioned at the manufacturing kitchen center and transported to satellite schools either hot, as in Washington, D.C., or under refrigeration, as in Livonia, Michigan. There are several variations of this procedure, including the preportioning of foods frozen at the point of preparation and heated in the satellite serving area.

A major innovation in preportioned school lunches was developed in St. Louis, Missouri, where tests were conducted in 1967 on a cold meal meeting the nutritional standards of the Type A lunch. The meal was originally packaged in a paper bag, but it is now served on a paper tray with a "see through" cover. It consists of a sandwich or fried chicken, fruit, raw vegetable, fruit gelatin or vegetable salad, a cookie, and one-half pint of milk. The meal is prepared in a district central preparation center and transported under refrigeration to schools. It offers the advantage of extending the school lunch program citywide to schools without any food service. It is also convenient to serve since it may be eaten in classrooms or at any location without problems of cleanup.

These random examples indicate the diversity of food service systems in various schools. As one school food service director indicated, it is no longer a matter of which system is preferable but which best meets the demands of the school and provides lunches to the greatest number of children under the best possible conditions. Although there are advantages and disadvantages in all systems, financial limitations and the pressing demands for school food service make any system a starting point.

If his elementary school cafeteria was designed to feed 150 students and now feeds 700, or if he has no cafeteria at all, a principal may find that his school is the rule rather than the exception. The free and reduced-price program has increased the pressure on school buildings and personnel, who may not always agree with the need to provide food to hungry children. Experience in schools throughout the nation,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however, indicates that with imagination and positive attitudes, children can be served an adequate lunch even under the most adverse conditions.

Because of the variations in areas, it is impossible to state categorically what specific equipment a school needs for a food service operation. In terms of equipment for an individual operation, the basic kitchen equipment for a 24-classroom elementary school with an enrollment of 720 students and 90 percent participation should include a minimum of the following: two compartmented convention ovens, two 60-gallon steam jacketed kettles, a 30- to 60-quart mixer, a cutter-mixer, an automatic slicer, no less than 100 cubic feet of freezer space, no less than 100 cubic feet of refrigerator space, work tables, three compartmented sinks, a two-compartment vegetable sink, baker's racks, utility carts, platform scales, a dishwasher (unless disposables are used), and a garbage disposal. Although the principal should be consulted in the selection of equipment, final authority on selection of equipment should rest with someone technically trained in quantity food service.

The ideal dining facilities for either a single unit or a satellite operation are small, intimate dining areas tastefully decorated, with tables of a variety of shapes and sizes. Again, ideally, the kitchen, dining room, and storage areas should be air conditioned. Such ideal conditions exist only in some of the more recently constructed schools.

Though there are schools that use hallways or classrooms for food service and others with "ideal" dining arrangements, in the majority of the schools, the dining room is a multipurpose room that may also serve as a study hall, classroom, or meeting room. Multipurpose rooms save considerable sums of money and provide the best possible utilization of space within the school. There are many ways to get food to children, and every effort should be made to properly feed them whether under optimum circumstances or not. We must no longer permit ourselves the luxury of saying we cannot feed children because we do not have ideal facilities.

Regardless of the area or type of service, it is apparent that some sort of supervision is necessary in the lunchroom during meals. It is the responsibility of the school principal to select the personnel and method of supervision best suited to his own school.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE: WHO IS IT?

By the very nature of his position, the elementary school principal is the leader of his school. He is looked to by students, teachers, administrators, and school food service workers as the individual responsible for educational and administrative functions and, in large part, the acceptance of various programs.

As a community leader, the principal is expected to promote education in general as well as the specific interests of his school and its students. Within the school and the community, the principal has an unequaled opportunity to influence the acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of the school food service program. In community appearances, in meetings with parents and parent groups, in faculty and staff meetings, and in contact with the general public, the school principal can do much to further the program by endorsing its objectives and operational procedures.

Across the nation, there are examples of schools that have a high rate of participation because the principal has "sold" the program to parents, teachers, and students. With all other factors equal, other schools in the same district may have an average participation of 75 percent or lower—the only element to which high participation can be attributed is the attitude of the school principal.

The principal can develop interest and participation in the food service program through individual or group contact with parents. Parental interest may be encouraged by explaining the relationship of the school food service program to an adequate diet, to the ability of the child to learn, and to the child's willingness to accept a well-balanced diet in the home. In cooperation with the school food service staff, the principal can extend invitations to parents and others in the community to visit the lunchroom, see the program in operation, and join the children for lunch. Involvement like this can do much to increase parental acceptance of the program.

On the administrative level, the principal is the individual

most likely to determine serving hours. A random survey conducted by the American School Food Service Association found that the principal determined serving schedules in approximately 80 percent of the schools responding. In other instances, serving hours were established at a district level.

In most situations, staggered serving hours are recommended since they reduce the time spent standing in line and lessen the rushed and hectic flow of students in and out of the lunchroom. In schools with participation of more than 300 students, the staggered schedule is particularly important because it provides a more efficient food service operation.

In addition to the responsibility for scheduling, the school principal is usually responsible for supervision in the lunchroom during the noon hour. Teachers have traditionally been requested in many schools to supervise during the lunch hour. Teacher dissatisfaction with this procedure, however, has led some principals to employ part-time workers to supervise students in the lunchroom, giving teachers an opportunity to lunch apart from the children with whom they work throughout the day. When parents or others are used for supervision, they should be responsible to the school food service supervisor, even if they are hired by the principal and paid from general school funds.

Many schools encourage teachers to take advantage of the school food service program and, in some instances, to share the lunch hour with students. Others give teachers the option of eating in separate dining facilities in the school or off campus. (There are few places where teachers can secure an adequate lunch at prices comparable to those charged in most school lunchrooms.) Some schools use student "monitors" to supervise other students; although this may be satisfactory in certain situations, there should be some adult supervision and control in the lunchroom.

In this day of centralization of responsibility at the district level, most school food service supervisors or managers of individual schools are employed by district offices and report directly to the district food service supervisor. It is obvious, of course, that the supervisor or manager must work with the principal if the program is to be effective. In the majority of school systems, the district office is responsible for employing all school food service personnel. In other districts, how-

ever, the individual manager may be responsible for hiring his staff in accordance with personnel requirements and job descriptions provided by the district headquarters.

The number of employees needed to operate a food service facility depends on the physical setup of the kitchen, the type and quantity of equipment, the length and number of serving periods, the extent of participation, and the abilities of the manager and his employees. Because of the number of factors involved, it is difficult to establish a definite rule for the number of employees. In very general terms, a formula of one person for every 75 meals is usually adequate. The phrase "very general terms" is used because of those factors already cited plus the rapidly changing technology that is influencing the school lunch program. Preportioned preparation techniques, innovative delivery services, and convenience foods used in varying degrees will be influential in revising personnel assignments and direct labor costs. Since there are many variables involved, it is most often the responsibility of the district food service supervisor to determine the production capability of each operation.

In the majority of school districts that employ district directors, the menus are planned in the district office, and the individual manager has been relieved of much of the administrative detail. Centralized purchasing and record keeping and other recent developments have reduced the time required of the manager for operation of a food service unit.

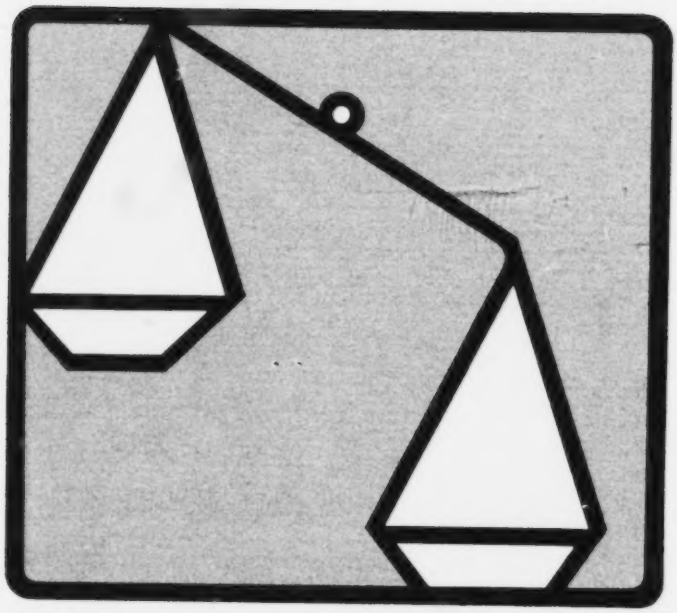
Cooperation between the lunchroom staff and the custodial staff is essential to the success of an operation. Lunchroom personnel are dependent on the custodial staff for certain services. There is often disagreement concerning job responsibility, and it is helpful if the principal can arrange for division of responsibility between these two groups. Help from the custodial staff is often needed in the food service operation: unloading and storing heavy items, such as 100-pound bags of sugar and cases of canned foods; emptying and cleaning garbage and trash containers; cleaning floors and other surfaces in the serving and preparation areas.

A successful school food service operation depends on the attitudes, cooperation, and work of many people. It is a cooperative effort, and the elementary school principal must serve as its leader and its spokesman in the school and the community.

THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE

As this nation enters the latter part of a century of accelerating change, there is an increasing emphasis on the conservation of our natural resources and a growing reaffirmation of the fundamental dignity of the individual. When concerned citizens and educators act to save the nation's natural resources, they must focus more and more attention on the conservation of our greatest national resource—our children. In order to understand this challenge, educators must look not only to changes in education but especially to socioeconomic conditions in the world around us. Given these conditions, the question of whether or not schools should feed our children becomes academic and archaic. Indeed, the question itself presupposes an option that in the 1970's no longer exists. Law suits requiring all schools to provide food service programs and to feed economically needy pupils have been initiated in various sections of the country. The National School Lunch Act is not always the sole basis for such legal action: Some suits are now initiated on the basis of what might best be described as "man's inalienable right to equal opportunity." The philosophy behind such an approach is that no man, level of government, or institution has the right to intercept or interrupt an available source of assistance offered by the federal government to the individual. If this legal approach doesn't work, it is only a matter of time until one is found that does succeed. There are boards of education being brought into court in search of decisions under the law that will proclaim once and for all that school food service is, in fact, an integral part of the school's job.

A summary of lawsuits recently furnished the USDA concerns 14 known cases in nine states. Those suits included the superintendent of schools, food service directors, school board members, state departments of public instruction, and state school lunch director. Issues involved were: refusal to give lunches to children who qualified; refusal to distribute application forms to all parents; poorly prepared and cooked



lunches served under unhealthful and unsanitary conditions; no lunch program in elementary schools.

Universal school food service by 1980—food for all children at no cost as a part of the school program—has been proposed by many leaders in education and food service. The North Carolina Association of School Administrators recently made a recommendation for such a universal program, and the American School Food Service Association included the proposal in its *Blueprint for Action in the 70's.*

As a result, a bill to establish a Universal Food Service and Nutrition Education Program for Children was introduced by Congressman Carl D. Perkins in March of 1971. Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the bill in the Senate in October 1971. In the policy declaration of the proposed Child Nutrition Act of 1971, it is stated that:

"Sec. 2. (a) The Congress hereby finds that (1) the proper nutrition of the Nation's children is a matter of highest priority, (2) there is a demonstrated relationship between the intake of food and good nutrition and the capacity of children to develop and learn, (3) the teaching of the principles of good nutrition in schools has been seriously inadequate, as evi-

denced by the existence of poor or less than adequate diets at all levels of family income, (4) any procedure or "means test" to determine the eligibility of a child for a free or reduced-price meal is degrading and injurious both to the child and his parents, and (5) the national school lunch and related child nutrition programs, while making significant contributions in the field of applied nutrition research, are not, as presently constituted, capable of achieving the goal of good nutrition for all children."

Once the legitimacy of school food service has been established, educators must examine the specific role of the program as it applies to the impoverished and nonimpoverished of our nation. School food service has a dual role to play for the poor. It provides their children with the daily nourishment without which they cannot be physically or mentally active, and, in many cases, it also provides them with an incentive for coming to school in the first place. Whether in a mountain valley or concrete canyon, education offers a tool to dissipate the syndrome of poverty—and food service should be a part of its program. It is a means of providing children with the most essential requirement of physical health, without which they can neither learn nor hope to overcome the difficulties of the harsh environment into which they were born.

Unfortunately, we cannot even assume that a child has adequate food when he comes from a home that *can* afford to buy the food he needs. A USDA study, concluded in 1968, revealed that affluent Americans were eating a less nutritious diet than they were ten years before. In 1955, 60 percent of the households studied ate a diet that met the recommended daily allowances. In 1965, only 50 percent of the households from all walks of life ate a "good" diet.

The heavy hand of socioeconomic change has taken its toll in the eating habits of Americans today. Migration from the farm to the city continues; close family life with rather well-regimented hours to modern family living with a trend toward the "every man for himself" approach has changed. In an era when families grew up on the farm, the eating of a variety of nutritionally sound foods in good quantity and at regular hours of the day was virtually second nature. However, in the helter-skelter urban life of precooked, prefrozen, dehydrated, freeze-dried, grab-it-on-the-run foods, sound nutrition falls victim to a new way of life. Food at school, as a part of the

educational process, is an answer to this problem.

In past years, with only a few notable exceptions, educators and school food service personnel have been tragically unimaginative in approaches to nutrition education. It is little wonder that the subject has not been a favorite with faculty or students. Yet the studies of Jean Mayer and others have for some time now documented the sad fact that American children of all social classes need not only food but information about food values.

The next two decades should see school food service reaching a very high percentage of the more than 50 million school-age children in our nation. There is little doubt that national and local efforts will increase to close the nutrition gap. Government at all levels will spend more for school food service facilities and their administration and operation. Program quality, equality, and equalization of opportunity will be major considerations as large food service operations absorb an increasing share of small administrative units. Centralization of purchasing, funds control and accounting, central and manufacturing kitchens, commissaries, the use of disposables and engineered foods, and an increased meal output per labor hour will become common practice. As we approach the 1980's, mobility and simplicity will be the order of the day, and programs must be prepared to provide food for all ages, at all hours, using equipment and staff with flexibility to meet new needs.

In the years ahead, there will be an expansion of the quantity of food services as more children attend more schools for more hours of the day and for more days of the week. These services will include not only lunch but food at other times when children are in school. These changes and expansions in the food service program will be seen not only in high schools but also in elementary schools, where children first face the future.

School principals and other administrators are increasingly sensitive to student needs and public pressures and demands. Today's citizens are concerned about hunger and malnutrition; schools of the future will have little choice but to be different. Administrators at all levels and elementary principals in particular are seeing the end of the era of blind, unquestioning faith in schools and the beginning of an era in which accountability and responsibility are the emerging themes.

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